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Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

Letter dated 20 November 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the declaration and decision adopted by the Eleventh Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Least Developed Countries, held at United Nations Headquarters on 15 November 2001 (see annexes I and II).

I would like to request that the present letter and its annexes be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 106.

(*Signed*) Iftekhar Ahmed **Chowdhury**
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of Bangladesh to the United Nations and
Coordinator of the Least Developed Countries

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Annex I to the letter dated 20 November 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Declaration adopted by the Eleventh Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Least Developed Countries, held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, on 15 November 2001

We, the Ministers of the Least Developed Countries,

Having met at the United Nations Headquarters during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, on 15 November 2001, pursuant to the decision of the Dhaka Declaration of February 1990,

Recalling the Millennium Declaration which contains determination of the Heads of State and Government to spare no efforts to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, and their undertaking to address the special needs of the Least Developed Countries,

Recalling the Ministerial Declaration of the Least Developed Countries adopted on 29 September 2000 during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations as well as the Ministerial Declaration made on the eve of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Brussels on 13 May 2001, declare that:

1. We welcome the adoption of the Brussels Declaration and the Programme of Action of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC III) held in Brussels from 14 to 20 May 2001, as a roadmap to our development partnership for the decade 2001-2010.

2. We express our appreciation to the European Union for acting as host to the Third United Nations Conference on LDCs as well as for their gracious hospitality, excellent arrangements and important contribution to the preparations for and the outcome of the Conference. We also express our appreciation to the Government and people of Belgium, as well as to the European Parliament for their warm hospitality and excellent support to the Conference.

3. We attach utmost importance to the outcome of the Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries for the decade 2001-2010, which has adopted as its overarching goal the reduction of extreme poverty by half by 2015. It also takes a holistic approach to development by articulating policies under seven areas of commitments by the LDCs and their development partners. It builds on the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits, in particular the Millennium Summit Declaration, and breaks new grounds in the areas of productive capacity, trade, financial flows and debt.

4. We consider that implementation of these commitments is a great test of the principle of strengthened partnership between the LDCs and their development partners. We reiterate our full commitment to the outcome of the LDC III and undertake to work closely with our development partners with a view to achieving speedy implementation of the commitments therein.

5. We recognize that the national-level involvement is the linchpin for success in the implementation of the outcome of the LDC III. However, we stress

that, without significant assistance and effort of the international community, the implementation of this programme of action will remain beyond reach of LDCs.

6. We, therefore, call upon the United Nations system and all other multilateral organizations as well as other stakeholders to mobilize their efforts in support of the implementation of the Programme of Action of LDC III with maximum coordination, synergy and full commitment.

7. We stress the need for effective assistance by the United Nations system, as well as other relevant multilateral organizations, in facilitating substantive participation of the Least Developed Countries in appropriate multilateral forums.

8. We welcome the decision adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its resumed substantive session of 2001, to establish, under its regular agenda item entitled "Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits", a regular sub-item "Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Least Developed Countries". We, however, understand that this decision does not exclude the possibility for the consideration, as appropriate, of the LDC issues in other relevant segments of the Economic and Social Council.

9. We emphasize that the dire socio-economic conditions in the LDCs require, among other things, substantial and concrete international support measures including appropriate poverty eradication programmes and removing the critical structural impediments to development they face. In order to undertake that responsibility, there is need to forge partnership among Governments, international organizations and civil society. The upcoming International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development should provide great opportunities for addressing many of these issues.

10. We note that the process of globalization and liberalization poses serious challenges to vulnerable countries, specially LDC, LLDCs and SIDS. In this regard, we welcome the action of the international community to address the specific concerns of these countries.

11. We support the agreed conclusions and recommendations adopted at the Fifth Meeting of Governmental Experts from Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Representatives of Donor Countries and Financial and Development Institutions, held in New York from 30 July to 3 August 2001, to convene in 2003 in Kazakhstan an International Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and Financial and Development Institutions on transit transport cooperation in order to give emphasis to the development of efficient transit transport system.

12. We also support the effective implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and subsequently of the Declaration and Review Documents adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-second special session.

13. We emphasize the importance of further improvements in the existing LDC criteria to make them reflective of structural weakness, impediments to human development, constraints on integration into the world economy, and vulnerability to environmental and ecological changes and natural disasters, as called for by the General Assembly resolution 51/183 of 16 December 1996. We are of the view that

the question of graduation of any LDC Member States should be deferred until such improvements in the criteria are brought about.

14. We recognize the importance of strengthened coordination and greater participation of LDCs in the implementation and follow-up of their Programme of Action. In this regard we decide to establish a Coordinating Bureau to be effective as of 1 January 2002.

15. We express our sincere appreciation and deep gratitude to the Government of Bangladesh for successfully discharging the responsibilities of the Coordinator of Least Developed Countries during the last two decades for the benefit of the collective efforts of LDCs in achieving the development goals.

Annex II to the letter dated 20 November 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Decision on a coordination mechanism for the least developed countries, adopted at United Nations Headquarters, New York, on 15 November 2001

The Eleventh Annual Meeting of the LDCs held on 15 November 2001 in New York,

Recalling the Programme of Action of the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on LDCs (LDC III) in Brussels,

Recognizing the importance of strengthened coordination and greater participation of the Least Developed Countries in the implementation and follow-up of the LDC III Programme of Action, decides:

1. To establish a coordination mechanism for the Least Developed Countries to be called the Coordination Bureau of the Least Developed Countries;

2. That the Coordination Bureau will be composed of the following members: a chairman and four vice-chairmen;

3. That the representation of the regional groups in the Coordination Bureau will be as follows: three from the African Group including Haiti and two from the Asian Group;

4. That the Bureau will be elected for a term of five years;

5. That the chairmanship of the Bureau will rotate alternately between the African Group, including Haiti and the Asian Group, and will start with the African Group;

6. That the Bureau will start functioning as from 1 January 2002.